### January - Lesson Plan Grades 2-3

# VARY YOUR VEGGIES



Begin each nutrition education lesson with a short physical activity break from the card set provided by IDPH. Have fun and get active with your students!

#### **Objectives**

Learn why it is important to eat vegetables.

Learn what cucumbers and bell peppers look like.

Experience the taste of different colored bell peppers.

#### **Supplies Needed**

January
Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> & **Act**bingo card

Green, yellow, and red peppers

Cucumber

Knife

"Fun Facts About Bell Peppers" information sheet

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – "Peppers and Cucumbers" crossword

### **Tasting Opportunities**

Featured vegetable:
Peppers
Cucumbers

#### **Background**

Vegetables are a good source of vitamins A and C. The darker green and darker yellow vegetables are especially high in vitamin A. Vitamin A helps our eyes adjust to dim light, keeps our skin healthy and keeps the lining of our mouth, nose, throat and digestive tract healthy. Vitamin C helps heal cuts. Vegetables also are a good source of fiber which helps to keep food moving through our bodies.

The featured vegetables for January are bell peppers and cucumbers. Both of these vegetables are commonly used in tossed salads.

Bell peppers can be green, yellow, or red. They grow on a plant that looks almost like a shrub. Peppers need to be washed before using them, seeds need to be removed as they can be bitter-tasting.

The colors of the bell pepper are determined by the level of ripeness of the vegetable. Red bell peppers are green peppers that have ripened on the vine. They are milder and sweeter when compared to green bell peppers. The variety of bell pepper also influences the color and flavor.

Bell peppers should not be confused with spicy chili peppers or black pepper "the spice." Pepper we use on the table comes from peppercorns that are ground up and come from a different plant.

Bell peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C. Red and yellow bell peppers have two times the amount of vitamin C compared to green peppers. Red peppers have nearly ten times more vitamin A than green and yellow bell peppers.

Cucumbers are a long green vegetable that grows on a crawling vine. One plant can grow eight or more cucumbers. Their skins are green and the flesh is white.

Cucumbers are crisp and cool when you bite into them. The

temperature on the inside of the cucumber can be as much as 20 degrees cooler than the air outside of the cucumber. Cucumbers were first grown in India and brought to Europe by Christopher Columbus. They arrived in North America in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.

Cucumbers are low in calories and have small amounts of vitamins A and C.

**Web Site Resources** 

www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabettersnack www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org www.choosemyplate.gov

Do the Activity: 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:

Read "Fun Facts About Bell Peppers" information sheet.

Use the letters that make the word vegetables: brainstorm and list vegetables that begin with each letter (V-E-G-E-T-A-B-L-E-S). This can be done as a class or individually. Make a vegetable Word Wall using these words. (The E's may be challenging. Some examples include endive and eggplant. Be creative on the 3<sup>rd</sup> "e." Try the Spanish word for "spinach" or have the students create a new vegetable that begins with "e." Try the same for "v." G=green pepper, green beans, greens; T=tomato; A=asparagus, artichoke; B= beets, beans, Brussels sprouts, bell pepper; L=lettuce, leeks; S=spinach, squash, sweet potato.)

3rd Grade:

Have the students complete the "Peppers and Cucumbers"

crossword included in the lesson.

Talk It Over:

Have you ever eaten any of these vegetables?

How did you eat them?

What colors of peppers have you eaten?

Bell peppers are sweet peppers. There are also hot peppers. Have any of you tried hot peppers also known as chilies?

Apply:

What are some ways you might add peppers and cucumbers to foods you already eat? (add to pizza, salads, soups, spaghetti sauce; both are great for a vegetable tray)

What are pickles made from? (cucumbers) Cucumbers are





made into pickles! Pickles often have had salt and sugar added to them so you need to be careful not to eat too many. You usually eat raw cucumbers with either a dip, sliced with a lettuce salad, or made into fancy sandwiches.

Why are peppers and cucumbers good for you? Peppers are rich in vitamin C that helps our cuts to heal. Cucumbers have lots of water and add flavor and crunch to our meals and snacks. Vegetables are a good source of vitamins to help keep our skin healthy and help our eyes adjust to dim light.

Have students sample cut up pieces of peppers and cucumbers. Have the students close their eyes and taste samples of red and green peppers. Do they taste the same or different? (The red pepper should taste sweeter.) They can then put an "X" through the bingo square of the vegetable(s) that they sampled.

What would you do (with adult help) to the featured January bingo card vegetables to get it ready to eat as a snack?

Peppers – Wash. Seed. Eat. (How easy is that?)
Cucumbers – Wash. Cut. Eat. (How easy is that?)

Pick a **better** snack<sup>™</sup> reminds you that it is easy to eat vegetables as snacks.

On the back of the Pick a **better** snack<sup>TM</sup> & **Act** bingo card for each month, there is information for parents and grandparents. Have the students take the bingo card home and have their family pick out a snack idea to try at home.





#### **Extend the Activity**



Art, Music & PE SWEET, SWEET, HOT PEPPER. Form a circle and sit on the floor. Whoever is "it" starts by walking around the circle saying sweet, sweet, sweet... until he or she taps someone and says "hot." Then the two players run in opposite directions, trying to get back to the empty space. Have the students name a sweet or hot pepper before the game continues (see background information).



Language Arts & Reading

Write an ad to encourage grocery store customers to buy green peppers or cucumbers.



Math

Create a graph with names of sweet and hot peppers and the number of students who have tried the different varieties.



Science & Health

Cucumbers and green peppers are both vegetable "fruits" — they are the fruits of the vegetable plant. Show pictures of what the vegetable plant, bush or vine looks like and discuss other vegetable fruits such as eggplant, okra, tomato, squash.



**Social Studies** 

Locate on a map where cucumbers came from. (*India*) How many miles is India from the United States?





appers and Cu	IC4p
1     2       3     1       5     1       6     7       10     12	
Across  3. Cucumbers have green skins and the flesh is  5. Green peppers taste good on  7. Christopher Columbus brought cucumbers to  8. Red Peppers have more than green peppers.  10. The need to be removed before eating bell peppers.  11. Cucumbers grow on crawling  12. Vitamin A helps our adjust to dim light.  13. Bell peppers grow on a plant that looks like a  14. Bell peppers can be green, red or	13
<b>Down</b> 1. The darker green and darker yellow vegetables are high in	Word Bank Cucumbers Europe
2. Green peppers turn to when left on the vine. 4. Most peppers grown in US come from 5. Most are sold when they are green. 6. Many people eat cucumbers in tossed 9. Pickles are made from 13. Bell peppers are peppers.	Eyes Florida Peppers Pizza Red Salads Seeds Shrub Sweet Vines Vitamin A Vitamin C White Yellow





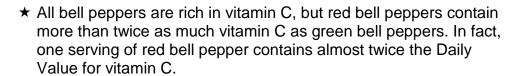


# Fun Facts About Bell Peppers

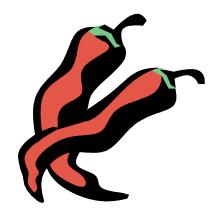


#### Did you know that...?

- ★ Peppers can come in a variety of sizes and shapes, from short and round to large and oblong.
- ★ Pepper flavors range from sweet to extremely hot. Bell peppers are sweet.
- ★ Peppers come in many colors, including green, yellow, red, and even brown and purple!
- ★ The most popular bell pepper in the United States is the green bell pepper.
- ★ Green and red bell peppers come from the same plant. As bell peppers mature, their color changes from green to red as they ripen and become sweeter. That's why red peppers are sweeter than green peppers.
- ★ Bell peppers have thick flesh with smooth, waxy skin and crunchy texture.



★ Peppers grow on bushy plants.

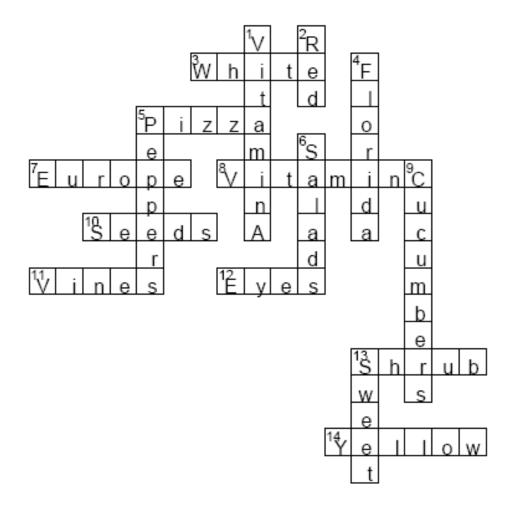








# Answer Key Peppers and Cucumbers



Adapted from 2004 Dole Food Company, Inc. Find more fun facts about fruits and vegetables at www.dole.com.



